



# Nimitz News



*"Teamwork - A Tradition"*

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## Nimitz departs India after historic port call



**Nimitz anchors off the coast of Chennai, India, last Monday.**  
Photo by MC3 Jake Berenguer.

## Nimitz visits school for deaf

**By MCSN John Scorza**  
*Nimitz Public Affairs*

Dozens of *Nimitz* crew members spent time helping out the Churches of South India (CSI) High School for the Deaf Wednesday.

During their visit, Sailors cleared more than 5,000 square feet of brush, built a walkway to the entrance, restored a concrete pond and painted the soccer posts. Somehow, they even found time to play with the children. The event was concluded with a special presentation by the students and a surprise appearance by Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Manazir.

"[Many] Sailors have taken the time to volunteer and do something good for the community of

Chennai," said Manazir.

The crew was happy to spend their time helping out the Chennai community.

"I was moved," said Lt. Dennis Evans of the Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 117. "The people there had a lot of pride in what they were doing and it made us all realize how fortunate we are as Americans."

"Being out there with the kids and helping them made it the best Fourth of July I ever had," said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Robert Johnson of VAW-117.

CSI High School for the Deaf was established in 1912, and currently houses 170 students between the ages of 5 and 20. The school is a charitable institution run with grants by the state government.

**By MCSN Matty J. Lanese**  
*Nimitz Public Affairs*

Sailors and Marines aboard *Nimitz* departed Chennai, India, Thursday after completing the first ever visit to India by an American aircraft carrier.

While visiting India, crew members took part in a multitude of tours to nearby temples and villages like Mahabalipuram.

"I went to Mahabalipuram and was amazed by the silk weavers," said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Stephanie Belcher of *Nimitz*. "It really made me appreciate their craft to see them do it first hand."

While some of the crew perused the attractions and sites, 659 crew members donated 3,954 man-hours of their time and labor to take part in several community relations projects.

"We had 120 volunteers helping clean up the Vishranti Home for the Aged," said Chief Religious Programs Specialist (SW) Oliver Andrews. "I think that the crew's interaction with the people was a positive step in setting up future relations with India."

While some organizations did not agree with the presence of an American carrier in their home waters, the representatives of India felt the port visit was a success for both countries.

"This ship's visit is the latest example of the positive development of our defense relationship," said U.S. Ambassador to India David C. Mulford in an article in the *Deccan Chronicle*, one of the leading English-language newspapers in Chennai, posted July 4.



**Nimitz Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Manazir, top middle, joins Sailors singing with students at the CSI High School for the Deaf.** Photo by MCSN John Scorza.



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PHOTOS BY NIMITZ MEDIA DEPARTMENT  
LAYOUT BY MCSN SARAH E. BITTER



# Crew helps children abroad

**By MC3(AW) Emily Stroia**  
*Nimitz Public Affairs*

**N**imitz Sailors and Marines took time during a historic port call to help children with AIDS in Chennai, India, Tuesday.

Thirty-five crew members visited the Community Health Education Society (CHES), which has worked toward AIDS prevention and care since 1994. They painted the interior of the house to help make a better environment for the children residing there.

"I feel very happy and feel like you all have become a part of us, especially the children, because they have no one," said Dr. Pinakapani Manorama, founder of the Community Health Education Society.

The shelter currently houses 43 children, seven of whom are infected with HIV, 12 have single parents and the rest are orphans. The significance of the work they were doing and the people they were helping was not lost on *Nimitz*' volunteers.

"I'm doing this for the children to make them feel as comfortable as possible," said Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Michael Delossantos of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14.

CHES' "Thooli" project aims at creating an enabling environment for the infected and affected children. It provides home-based care for children and conducts sensitization programs for families and communities and identifies potential foster care parents.



**NC1(AW/SW) Roderick Casey, of VFA-81, paints a gate for the Community Health Education Society.** Photo by MC3(AW) Emily Stroia.

## Sailors give elderly home youthful look

**By MCSN Scott McCall**  
*Nimitz Public Affairs*

**N**imitz Sailors gave of their time at the Vishranti Home for the Aged Monday.

Established in 1978, Vishranti is an elderly home for women. Having started with only one tenant in a rented home, it now houses more than 100 women on a one-acre stretch of land.

"It's good to help someone who needs it," said Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class (AW) Eric Beattie. "I always loved helping my grandparents. These are someone else's grandparents and they need help too."

Crew members gave the top half of Akilandeswari Hall a fresh coat of whitewash and the bottom half a fresh coat of pink.

"It was great helping out and painting today; it was something different. It's always great helping people who need it," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Steven Werk.

After all was said and done, the volunteer crew members entertained the women by socializing and singing songs for them until it was time to head back to the ship.

"By doing this you can say you went out and did something; you helped someone else out," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 1st Class (AW/SW) Robert Cummings. "At first I didn't know what to expect, but what made the experience great was the people here."



**AC2(AW) Katrina Moore paints a room in Akilandeswari Hall of the Vishranthi Home for the Aged. This project was one of 11 community relations projects the *Nimitz* crew carried out in Chennai.** Photo by MCSN Scott A. McCall.



# Nimitz makes “mithras” at MITHRA

By MCSN Sarah E. Bitter  
Nimitz Public Affairs

The Madras Institute to Habilitate Retarded Afflicted (MITHRA) welcomed Sailors and Marines to their abode Monday.

The 51 *Nimitz* crew members painted, juggled, sung and strummed the guitar for MITHRA children. *MITHRA* means “friend” in the Sanskrit language.

“We are a non-profit organization founded 31 years ago,” said Father Michael Raj, school’s principal. “We have children that are unwanted, uncared for, physically and mentally handicapped. This school is run on God’s providence and donations from good people.”

The volunteers painted the second-floor classrooms and two murals to help

out the organization.

“It’s exciting to make a real difference,” said Lt. Kelley Gilbert. “I feel great doing something in a new country that is helpful.”

After volunteers completed painting, one crew member demonstrated his juggling talent to the kids.

“This was an awesome experience because I am a dad,” said Chief Navy Counselor (AW/SW/SCW) Jeremy McMullen of Carrier Air Wing 11. “They were laughing, and even though we could not understand each other’s words, we still were able to figure out each other’s gestures.”

Crew members topped off the visit by teaching the children the Hokey Pokey and presenting MITHRA with a plaque and basic necessities such as medicine and toiletries.



SKSN Ye Sang paints the Madras Institute to Habilitate Retarded Afflicted during the port call to Chennai, India. Photo by MCSN Sarah E. Bitter.

## “Sunliners” visit poor boys home in Chennai

By MC2 Dustin Q. Diaz  
Nimitz Public Affairs

Sailors from the “Sunliners” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 81 visited the children at the Madrasa-i-azam Home for Poor Boys during *Nimitz*’ historic port call to Chennai, India, Monday.

The squadron, based in Oceana, Va., usually does its outreach projects together as a command, and the Sailors quickly volunteered for all 50 spots to help local citizens on the other side of the world.

“We wanted to help out the locals and see a part of the city we wouldn’t see otherwise,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class (AW) Breck Aillet, one of the team leaders for the Sunliners, who was volunteering for his third project with the Navy. “We always get tons of volunteers for these, and this time was no exception.”

While the Sunliners could have spent their first day of liberty in a month exploring the fourth-largest metropolitan city in India, they instead landscaped the facilities at the home, cleaned and painted classrooms and interacted with the students.

“It’s cool how happy they are to see us,” said Aviation Electronics Technician Airman (AW/SW) Jesse Smith. “I came from a rough neighborhood in Decatur, Ga., and I’ve seen how cleaning up a



VFA-81 CMDRCM(SS/SW) John Wood talks to students at the Madrasa-i-azam Home for Poor Boys. Photo by MC2 Dustin Q. Diaz.

community can change the outlook of its people.”

Another Sailor, Aviation Structural Mechanic Airman Ryan Garganta, said this was his first project with the Navy, and he’s eager to do more.

“My parents come from a third-world country, so I really enjoy getting the chance to help out,” Garganta said.

The school provides free room, board and education for around 150 poor and orphaned boys, and this was the first time many of them ever met an American.

“I’m very happy the ship came,” said student Ameer Khan, 13. “I want to thank the Sailors for visiting and helping us.”

Team leader Lt.j.g. William Fox said this wasn’t his first time visiting India, but it was his first time volunteering to help its people with the Navy.

“I think it turned out great,” said Fox. “These projects are a great way to get to know people at your command. We got a lot of good work done and were able to give back some of what we’ve been given. And these projects let you meet a lot of people around the world you’d never run into otherwise.”

Before boarding the bus to return to *Nimitz*, Fox and the Sunliners handed out candy to the eager and appreciative students.



# Sailor saves shipmates, earns promotion

By MCSN Sarah E. Bitter  
Nimitz Public Affairs

A sailor who assisted his shipmates in evacuating a sinking liberty boat that was returning to *Nimitz* during their scheduled port call to Chennai, India, July 2, was recognized by the ship's commanding officer with an immediate promotion for "being a true leader" and ensuring that 40 of his fellow crew members returned safely to the ship.

Yeoman 2nd Class (SW) Sam Jones III received the promotion when *Nimitz* left Chennai July 5.

"The captain of the [Indian] boat was running back and forth," said Jones. "He was speaking broken English. No one could really understand him. He began by putting his life vest on and managed to communicate to us that we should do the same. So we donned our life vests and then went to the top of the boat. I could see that the starboard bow was sinking."

Jones managed to stay calm, cool, and collected while others began to panic.

"I just wanted everyone to remain calm," added Jones. "Then the other life boat pulled alongside. I straddled it and began helping



**YN2(SW) Sam Jones III, newly advanced after helping to save his shipmates in Chennai, India.** Photo by MCSN Matty J. Lanese.

people get to the other boat. After everyone was on the other side I went back in and double-checked to make sure everything and everybody was off the sinking vessel."

Jones explained how it was not just him in the evolution; it was a "team effort." He explained, "I just did what I felt like I had to do."

Jones, a 28-year-old native of Houston, joined the Amphibious Construction Battalion after boot camp, where he earned his rating as a yeoman. He has been stationed aboard *Nimitz* for two years and works as a departmental yeoman for Reactor in addition to leading EOD physical training sessions each day.

He explained that his four years in the Navy have molded him and brought him a long way.

"I am blessed to be a part of it," Jones said. "This was a very humbling experience."

*Nimitz* Commanding Officer, Capt. Mike Manazir, announced over the ship's 1MC (ship's general announcement) that "YN3 Jones has been promoted today to second class petty officer through the Command Advancement Program. Those are the actions taken by a true leader and what I am able to do as commanding officer is give him increased responsibilities. So if you see now-YN2 Jones, congratulate him."

# Sailors and Marines lend a helping hand

By MC3 Keith Hutton  
Nimitz Public Affairs

*Nimitz* Sailors and Marines visited the Indian Council for Children Welfare (ICCW) center July 2 as part of a beautification project.

The ICCW center, located in the state of Tamil Nadu, is a voluntary organization working toward basic human rights for children. The center houses and teaches 80 orphan boys.

"The kids were really touching; they put a smile on your face," said Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Bartley Petroff.

The 60 Sailors and Marines arrived at the ICCW center at 9:30 a.m. and got straight to business with their projects.



**Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate Steven Gonzalez of HS-6 paints playground equipment at the Indian Council for Child Welfare.** Photo by MC3 Keith Hutton.

"We love the fact that *Nimitz* is taking time out to come here and work for our children," said

Usha Davalur, the cultural affairs program manager.

Projects included painting the

children's dormitories, child line rescue center and playgrounds. Crew members cleared debris and trash around the center as well.

The volunteers' hard work didn't go unappreciated as children and workers from the organization thanked them and had nothing but praise.

"They were all very excited about what we had done," said Petroff.

It was clear that many of the volunteers from *Nimitz* felt the same way.

"I think that it's a great opportunity to be involved with another country," said Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Marqueta Rodgers. "And the fact that they are hosting us is awesome!"



# Chennai girls beat visiting *Nimitz* in “football”

From NDTV.com

*Nimitz* may have done duty in many of America’s military campaigns, but the crew of the world’s largest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier is no match for the girls of Chennai when it comes to football.

In a friendly match played in the city, the *Nimitz* team lost to a team of school girls on the ship’s last day in Chennai.

Many of the girls didn’t have proper shoes but the Sailors of the world’s largest aircraft carrier were no match for the Chennai girls, who won 3-1.

“It’s a happy and proud moment for us. This was possible only because of our teachers,” said Hepsy, a student of the Monahan Girls School.

“The match was a little tough, but finally we managed to win,” said Sukanya, another student. “This will be an unforgettable win for us always.”

In another part of the city it was the turn of hearing-impaired children to entertain *Nimitz* volunteers with their dance and drama - a gesture that touched the visitors.

“The community service program was a great way to strengthen ties between India and the U.S. It was fantastic,” said Capt. Mike Manazir, *Nimitz* Commanding Officer.



**Sailors and Marines play a friendly soccer game with the Monohan High School girls soccer team.** Photo by MCSN John Scorza.

“Hopefully I should be able to come back to Chennai here again to see the kind of progress the communities we served have made,” said James Bayley, *Nimitz* volunteer.

“The kids were just thrilled, they became one with them,” said Rebecca Doraipandian, Headmistress, CSI School for the Deaf.

It was a beautiful experience of giving and receiving over the past few days ever

since *Nimitz* docked in Chennai. While the controversy over its arrival in Chennai may soon die down, members of its crew have certainly left an indelible mark in the hearts and minds of local communities here.

**Editor’s note:** Media Department wrote many positive stories about the Chennai port call, but we found this one in the local media and wanted to share it with you.

## “Black Aces” landscape St. George’s Cathedral

By MCSN Michael Tialemasunu  
*Nimitz Public Affairs*

Sailors from the “Black Aces” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 41 restored St. George’s Cathedral’s landscape during their scheduled port call to Chennai, India, Tuesday.

St. George’s, built in 1815, is the headquarters of the Catholic church of South India.

“It’s fantastic that Sailors are doing hard work,” said Meena Reddy of the Online American Library for South India. “The expressions on their faces show dedication and passion for what they are doing.”

VFA-41 Executive Officer Cmdr. Rob Osterhoudt talked about how much he liked this community relations project.

“It was a wonderful way to show our good will and develop friendships with the Indians,” said Osterhoudt. “It was nice to beautify a place for them so they could relax.”

Sailors dug a manure pit, cleared the garden of debris and planted saplings in the garden in an effort to help out as much as they could during the project.



**AO2 Joshua Vanderschaaf and AZ2 Matthew Johnson of VFA-41 plant a tree in the garden at St. George’s Cathedral.** Photo by MCSN Michael Tialemasunu.



# Nimitz crew members donate Navy cash

By MCSN Sarah E. Bitter  
Nimitz Public Affairs

Deployed Sailors and Marines aboard *Nimitz* donated thousands of dollars for outreach efforts they participated in during a scheduled port call to Chennai, India.

Crew members donated \$7,058 of their money to augment community relations (COMREL) project funds that the ship received from Commander, 7th Fleet to ensure that the ship had enough money to support all of the projects Sailors wanted to complete. Some of the funds also went to buy a water purifier for Reddiarkuppam, a fishing settlement near Chennai that was devastated by a tsunami in 2005.

"This is a Navy tradition," said Cmdr. Michael Dory, command chaplain. "This ship's people are really aware of the needs of others. We have the ability to do this and it has a profound affect on Sailors. It's impressive to see E-2s and E-3s giving their money. When crew members see real poverty and good people struggling, it becomes a life-changing experience."

Personnel Specialist 2nd Class (SW) April

Jones explained how delighted she was to see all of the crew get together and donate their time and money for the events.

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***"It's impressive to see E-2s and E-3s giving their money. When crew members see real poverty and good people struggling, it becomes a life-changing experience."***  
**Cmdr. Michael Dory,**  
**command chaplain**

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"It's nice to watch people donate," said Jones. "It makes me happy to know that we are helping people in need. I am also glad that

people are donating their time and money for a mission like this. I really hope this helps people that need it."

Jones was not the only one to get into the spirit of giving; Legalman 1st Class (SW/AW) Jennifer Ronspies also took part in the charitable event.

"It felt great to give money to help a good cause," said Ronspies. "I really want to do everything that I can to help. I am happy to contribute to something that is bigger than myself."

The 11 COMRELs that *Nimitz* crew members took part in included the Indian Council for Child Welfare, Madras Institute to Help Retarded Afflicted, Vishranthi, Madrasa-i-azam Home for Poor Boys, Tsunami Village, Anjuman-e-himayath-e-Islam school, Community Health Education Society, St. George's Cathedral, Churches of South India High School for the Deaf, Government Hobart Secondary School and Corporation Middle School.

In all, 659 Sailors from *Nimitz* and USS Pinckney (DDG 91) provided 3,954 man-hours of volunteer work while the ships visited Chennai July 2 – 5.

## Faces of Chennai



A smiling local greets Sailors during a Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored tour of Mahabalipuram. Photo by MCSN Matty J. Lanese.



A man charms a snake to entertain tourists during a Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored tour of Mahabalipuram. Photo by MCSN Matty J. Lanese.





Photos and layout by MCSN John Scorza

